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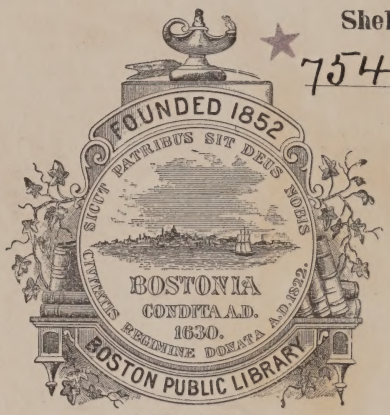

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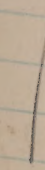

A MEMORIAL OF GOD'S GOODNESS.

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BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF

TWO SERMONS,

PREACHED IN THE

First Church of Christ in Braintree,

SEPT. 16, 1739,

* 17541. 327

ON COMPLETING THE FIRST CENTURY SINCE THE GATHERING OF IT.

BY JOHN HANCOCK, M. A.
THEIR PASTOR.

Printed at the earnest desire of the hearers; *in remembrance of God's mercy.*

TOGETHER WITH SOME MARGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. . . . . HOS. xi. 1.

And these are ancient things. . . . . 1 CHRON. iv. 22.

But many of the priests, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice. . . EZRA iii. 12.

Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works. . . . . REV. ii. 5.

BOSTON:

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Hon. Josiah Quincy,
Nov. 14, 1895.

DEDICATION.

TO THE FLOCK OF CHRIST,

UNDER MY PASTORAL CARE.

Dearly Beloved,

YOUR importunity, and the reasons on which it is founded, have prevailed upon me to publish these discourses, when nothing else could have overcome my aversion to the publication of them. I must confess that such a public record of the wonders of God's power and mercy in your settlement and increase to this time, is but a proper testimony of gratitude to your great Preserver ; and may be of use to perpetuate the memory thereof *in your families, and throughout your generations, that the memorial of them may not perish from your seed ; but that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise, and declare them to their children.* With this moving argument, you have obtained my consent, and so you will clear me of the odium *of withholding more than is meet.*

Having therefore this testimony in your hands, you may frequently review it, to see the dealings of God with you and your fathers, and your *calling* to *exalt him*, and *trust* in him. Let it be a remembrancer to fix in your minds the sense of God's *ancient loving kindnesses*, and your strong obligations to answer the pious design of your transplantation into this wilderness. May those words of grace to the people of Israel be remembered and verified unto us ; *Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first fruits of his increase ; all that devour him shall offend : evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord.**

The uncommon sufferings and hardships our fathers endured in their wearisome pilgrimage in this wilderness, *to seek a godly seed*, should endear their memory to us, alleviate the pressure of our own troubles, and obviate all our complaints. Alas ! our sufferings are not worthy to be compared with theirs, *in the days of their pilgrimage ;* who were in perils by robbers, in perils by their own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness : why should we then complain and murmur *that the former days were better than*

* Jer. ii. 2, 3.

these? It is true, God may justly complain of us, that *as we have been increased, so we have sinned against him; and that from the days of our fathers we are gone away from his ordinances, and have not kept them.* But yet *he has not changed our glory into shame,* nor *taken his kingdom from us.* Our temporal prosperity and increase is an encouraging argument that we are still *beloved for the Father's sake,* and for the sake of the many thousands in this land that *fear God, and think upon his name.*

I am sensible of the darkness and difficulty with which some of the affairs of government are perplexed at this time: *The province is in great affliction,* but yet *we are not in despair,* so long as *our wise men that are among us are our pilots, and rule with God.*

And the revival of religion among all orders and ages of persons, and particularly of a public charitable spirit (which we should all *earnestly covet)* would greatly contribute to extricate us from all our difficulties and dangers: for the religion of Jesus consults the prosperity of the state as well as of the church: and the practice of godliness will serve the great interest of both. For *the throne is established by righteousness, and righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is the reproach, and will be the ruin, of any people. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassion, every man to his brother, and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor.* Zach. vii. 9, 10.

Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, let my counsel be acceptable to you, to approve yourselves good and useful members of the state, and shining examples of piety in the church, *praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, for the peace of Jerusalem, and seeking its good, because of the house of the Lord. Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all. You are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and your Offspring with you.* I write unto you, *fathers, young men, and little children,* and honestly design the glory of God and our mutual edification in the composure and publication of the following discourses; humbly beseeching the *God of our fathers,* and *the God of all grace,* to accompany the same with his blessing, to make me a faithful pastor to your souls, and bless all my administrations to serve the interest of our common Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I trust you will cordially accept this token of unfeigned love to you, and desire of your eternal felicity.

From your affectionate Pastor,

JOHN HANCOCK.

Braintree, Dec. 6, 1739.

A

MEMORIAL OF GOD'S GOODNESS.

ISAIAH lxiii. 7.

I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us: and the great goodness towards the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving-kindnesses.

THIS day completes a century since the foundation of this first and ancient church was laid. Memorable have been the interchangeable providences of God towards it in this period, as we may well suppose in the present mutable state of things: but it hath survived the various changes of time, *according to God's mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses. Having therefore obtained help of God, we continue unto this day*, a monument of his sparing mercy under the visible decays of piety among us; and have this happy opportunity * to commemorate and mention the loving kindnesses and praises of the Lord, according to all he hath bestowed on us in particular, and his great goodness towards his people in general, in the dispensations both of grace and providence.

These words are a devout meditation and expression of God's great and unwearied goodness to his church, and the praises due unto him for it. They were spoken either by the church, or by the prophet in their name, and are written for our learning, and if I mistake not, will afford us some pious instructions and reflections suitable to the business of this day.

* Upon the Lord's day, when the administration of the Lord's Supper was attended, and the church solemnly renewed the original church covenant. The church was gathered on Monday, Sept. 16, 1639.

Here I shall observe this important truth as comprehending the sense of the text, viz. that it has been the exemplary and pious care of the church of God, to mention his loving kindnesses, and praises, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on them in the riches of his mercy ; to make a solemn mention and memorial of the riches of the divine goodness, as indeed the church of Christ on earth, the church militant, *is full of his riches.* The words of the text are very emphatical, and full to this purpose ; they abundantly express the memory of his great goodness, they express the greatest sense and acknowledgment of the church of Israel, for the great goodness which God had bestowed on them and on their fathers, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.

In discoursing on this subject, I shall endeavour to shew, 1. That it is the duty, and hath been the pious practice of God's people to preserve and express the memory of his great goodness to them. 2. It is also their duty, and hath been their pious care to express the praises of the Lord in remembrance thereof.

I. I am to shew, that it is the duty and hath been the pious practice of God's people to preserve and express the memory of his great goodness to them. This is the pious resolution of the church of God, *I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and his great goodness towards the house of Israel.* This supposes a due commemoration and sense thereof, and that the heart is warmed with deep meditation thereon : For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth uttereth the memory of God's great goodness, as the devout psalmist declares, *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned, then spake I with my tongue.** Again, *I will remember the works of the Lord ; surely I will remember thy wonders of old ; I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.*† Whereas forgetfulness of God, and his wonderful works, robs him of the glory of an honourable mention of them ; therefore the people of God should take great care to keep in their minds the remembrance of his wonderful works both to

* Psalm xxxix. 3. † Psalm lxxvii. 11, 12.

themselves and to the church, lest they bury any of them in ungrateful oblivion, and restrain their grateful acknowledgments of them: So they should refresh and strengthen their memory by frequent recollection and meditation of them; that they may be always ready to mention them to the praise of God. Particularly,

1. It well becomes the people of God to make solemn mention of his loving-kindnesses to themselves. *I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us.* Every one that is godly will take particular notice of God's loving kindness to himself, and be ready to speak of it to the glory of God. *Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.** So should every particular church and society of christians consider and declare what *great things the Lord hath done for them;* as the church of Israel celebrates the memory of God's wonderful works to them, *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad;*† as in their plantation-growth, preservation, and remarkable deliverances from manifold dangers. But how great is the sum of them! That declaration of the psalmist should be often in our lips, *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works, which thou hast done, ana thy thoughts which are to us-ward, they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee. If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*‡ But the more remarkable instances of God's loving kindness should be suitably noticed and celebrated by us as we are a body of people, or a communion of visible saints, a church of Christ.

The planting and settling of churches is the *work of the Lord that he may be glorified.* God sends his gospel into *one place of his dominion*, and not into another; affords to one nation the means of salvation, and not to another; *one piece is rained upon*, and made fruitful with the doctrines of grace and salvation, *and the piece whereupon it raineth not, withers and is nigh unto cursing.* This is a mysterious dispensation of the infinitely wise, good and holy God: He giveth no account of this matter, but *righteous art thou, O Lord, when we plead with thee; righteous in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works.*

* Psalm lxvi. 16. † Psalm cxxvi. 3. ‡ Psalm xl. 5

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? It must be resolved into the divine sovereignty; *Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.**

Thus it pleased the sovereign and only wise God to set up his candlesticks and cause the light of the glorious gospel to shine *in these dark places of the earth which were full of the habitations of cruelty*, not a century and half ago. This is the doing of the Lord, and it should be marvellous in our eyes.

These churches have abundant cause *to sing of the mercy*, the distinguishing mercy *of the Lord*, in planting, watering, increasing and defending them to this time: *If it had not been the Lord who was on our side*, may these New-English churches say, *if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

We should with the church of Israel of old set up our Ebenezer,† our stone of help and say, *hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*

This church of Christ in particular should do it this day, *Set up* a memorial of the divine goodness, and *mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, according to all that he hath bestowed on us.* This, this is the day of the gladness of our heart, for *God's manifold mercies* to us and to our fathers, and if it be the day of *our espousals to Christ*, we shall have cause enough to *rejoice in the Lord alway, with joy unspeakable:* The Lord grant it may be so *in his good pleasure.*

This is a very proper time to recollect, consider and rehearse *what great things God hath done for us*, as a church and people, and for every one of us in particular, that we may be suitably prepared, disposed and quickened to praise the Lord for them. Let us not neglect and miss the happy opportunity, but diligently improve it to the glory of God, and to our furtherance in christian knowledge, and practical godliness.

2. It becomes the people of God to mention his great goodness towards the church in general. *I will mention the great goodness towards the house of Israel, which he*

* Matt. xi. 25, 26. † I Sam. vii. 12.

hath bestowed on them. This indeed is a very copious theme, and who is sufficient to give the sacred history? *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his praise?* But it is our duty, and it should be a sacred pleasure to revolve in our minds, and declare with our mouths the wonderful works of God to his church in all ages; though we are not able to set them all in order.

The prophet, or the church, whoever it is that speaks here, doth not confine the consideration of the divine goodness to themselves of that generation, but generously extends the review of it to distant ages of the church that were past; and mentions his great goodness to the church in general. And indeed there is such a summary of church-history in the Holy Bible from the beginning of time, as may furnish rich matter for our delightful exercise in the duties of religion, both for meditation, praise and discourse. *O how great is his goodness* which he hath bestowed on the church from age to age!

As the church of Israel were formed and preserved by a series of remarkable providences, so God took care to preserve the remembrance thereof in several ways to the latest posterity. Particularly,

Of their very remarkable deliverance from the Eygptian bondage, and miraculous preservation in the wilderness forty years, till their introduction and settlement in the land of Canaan. These things are so full of the wonders of God's power and mercy that they well deserved to be commemorated and acknowledged *in all their generations*, and indeed in all ages of the church.

Accordingly, God commanded his people Israel to transmit the knowledge of them down to all their generations: *That one generation might praise his works to another.** *That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.* †*We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.*

* Psalm lxxviii. beg. † Psalm xliv. 1.

This was one wise and effectual method God took to preserve the knowledge of his will and works in the church of Israel, viz. PARENTAL INSTRUCTION.

Moreover, God instituted several memorials or monuments of his wonderful works of mercy to them. So the passover was instituted "in remembrance of his mercy" in bringing them out of Egypt, when he slew all the first-born in Egypt, a night to be much observed to the Lord in their generations. "It shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses."* Yea, so great was the deliverance, that God hath preserved the memory of it in the preface to the decalogue or moral law, which is in these words, "I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."† You may observe also, that in the repetition of the law of the Sabbath,‡ the observation of it is enforced upon the Israelites, from the consideration of that deliverance. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm, therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day:" Though originally instituted in memory of the creation.§

The song of Moses recorded in Exodus 15, is a standing memorial of the great deliverance God gave them by the destruction of the host of the Egyptians in the Red Sea.

Their miraculous preservation in the wilderness forty years, where God fed them with manna, and *gave them of the corn of heaven, and they did eat angel's food*, was commemorated by the *golden pot that had manna*, and was put in the ark within the veil.¶

In like manner God was pleased to preserve the remembrance of his miraculous work, "in dividing the waters of Jordan" for the armies of Israel to pass safely through, as on dry land, by causing "twelve stones to

* Exod. xii. 26, 27. † Exod. xx. 2. Exod. xvi. 32, &c.
‡ Deut. v. 15. § Gen. ii. 3. ¶ Heb. ix. 4.

be taken out of the midst thereof, and set up in Gilgal for a memorial forever."* Thus "God made his wonderful works to be remembered," his wonderful works to the house of Israel, in that remarkable period from their memorable deliverance out of Egypt, to their introduction to Canaan, which prepared their way for their future establishment and prosperity.

As God hath had a church in the world from the beginning, so he hath taken special care of its preservation and support. It is built upon Christ, "the rock of ages," so "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The "burning bush is not consumed." "Many a time," may the church say, "have they afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me." The world, the flesh, and the devil act in confederacy against it; yet it stands secure against all the assaults that have been made upon it, from earth and hell. The Lord is in the midst of it, its glory and defence: "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of her."†

Sometimes the glory of the church has been made *thin*, and the true worshippers of God have been "few" in number, yea, "very few."

In the time of great declension in the church of Israel, in the days of the prophet Elijah, he verily thought in himself that he "only was left, and of the people there was none with him, that feared God, and thought upon his name, no not one." But yet at that time there "was a remnant left."‡ God always preserves a remnant in the heaviest judgments which he brings upon his people. "A remnant shall be saved" in times of the greatest defection and apostasy from the faith.

So in the times of antichristian superstition and tyranny for several centuries together, before the dawning of the reformation, the christian church seemed to be buried in the rubbish: "Darkness covered the church, and gross darkness the people:" And there was but little hope of its recovery, and emerging out of that sinking and ruinous state; but then it was "time for God to work," with whom all things are possible; "by whom else should Jacob arise when he is small

* Josh. iv. 6, 7. † Zech. ii. 5. ‡ 1 Kings xix. 14, 18.

and without strength, to his former strength, beauty, and glory? And indeed God raised up some confessors of Christ and his sacred truths in the most declining and corrupt state of the Church, some of whom sealed the truth with their blood ;* till at length above two hundred years ago, God raised up and inspired a Luther, one of the wonders of the church, with zeal and courage to preach against the Pope's unchristian mandates, and begin a reformation of religion.† And he lived to see this glorious work go on prosperously in several parts of Germany, Switzerland, &c. In England also, he saw several attempts made towards a reformation by means of Archbishop Cranmer who happily laid the foundations of it.‡ After Luther's death,§ God form-

* The learned Dr. Edwards in his answer to that objection of the Papists, *That the Protestant religion is new and upstart*, has given us a catalogue of the confessors of Christ and his sacred truths from the rise of Popery in the seventh century, to the time of reformation in the sixteenth century. Among many other glorious defenders of the faith, these that follow deserve a particular mention : viz. Bede, Johannes Scotus, Smaragdus, Berengarius, Bernhard. Peter Waldo, Gulielmus Parisiensis, John Dun Scotus, Nicolas Lyra, John Wickliffe, William Santre, parish priest of London, who was burnt alive Feb. 26, 1400. He was the first that suffered death in England by that bloody act, De Heretico Comburendo, for *heresy*. That bloody statute stood unrepealed till 1667. *Rapin.*

In the fifteenth century also in Bohemia appeared John Hus and Jerome of Prague, who for opposing popish errors were condemned to the stake by the Council of Constance.

Then in the sixteenth century flourished that eminent reformer, Martin Luther, and others. Thus there have been testimonies against Popery in every age, and the true protestant religion may be fairly vindicated from the imputation of novelty.

† Martin Luther was an Augustine Friar and professor in Divinity, in the new university at Wirtemberg in Germany, who in 1517 alarmed the Pope, by publishing some writings, not without some satyrical remarks upon the plenary indulgences granted by Pope Leo 10, and ordered to be publicly sold at so moderate a price, that a man must have been very careless of his own salvation not to purchase them. This sale of indulgences was made on pretence of carrying on the war with the Turks. Hence sprung the glorious reformation from Popery. *Rapin.*

‡ Thomas Cranmer, that eminent reformer and venerable prelate, commenced doctor in divinity in 1523. He was born at Aslackton in Nottinghamshire, 1489. *Burnett.* Who having been professor at Cambridge had lost his place upon being married. He had travelled into Germany where he had read Luther's works, and embraced his doctrines. Whilst he was only doctor, and in quality of preceptor in a gentleman's house at Waltham ; he opened the way for king Henry VIII's divorce, 1529, from which time he was ordered to follow his court, and was ever in great esteem by that monarch. Cranmer suffered Martyrdom in queen Mary's reign, March 21, 1556, in the 67th year of his age. *Rapin.*

§ Luther died at Eysleben in Saxony, Feb. 18, 1546, in the 63d year of his age. It is remarkable that he died quietly in his bed, in the midst of

ed many useful instruments to carry on the reformation from popery, till whole nations and kingdoms became protestant.* And especially in the English nation, which has been very much the glory and bulwark of the reformation to this time, and God grant it may be so even to the consummation of all things.† Thus the state of the church has been chequered with light and darkness, but "the glory of God hath shined through the thick darkness, and has been a light unto it," and we trust in God that he will "still appear in his glory, and build up Zion" in all generations.

Moreover, as it becomes the people of God to "utter the mighty acts of the Lord" to his church in general, and speak of his glory in the defence and preservation of it to this day, so it becomes them to "mention his great goodness" to it in all the revelations of his word and spirit, from the first and ancient promise of the Messiah, in Gen. iii. 15, to the completing of the sacred canon *in the fulness of time:* by which the people of God in all ages of the church have had the knowledge of his will, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ revealed to them, more darkly indeed under the Mosaic dispensation, and distant ages of it, but now clearly and universally by the gospel, and the promulgation of it among the Gentiles.

For many ages the church was very much confined to the Jews within the limits of Canaan; to them "pertained the adoption, the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came who is over all, God blessed forever." Thus "he shewed his

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a multitude of popish enemies, who had often thirsted for his blood; an instance of the powerful protection of Divine Providence towards his faithful servants; who has said, *touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.* Psalm cv. 15.

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* The diet of the empire at Spire making a decree against the reformation, April 19, 1529, several of the princes of the empire publicly read their protest against it, whence the Reformed take the famous name of Protestants.

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† As bishop Ridley, and the venerable old bishop Latimer were burning at the stake, Oct. 16, 1555, Latimer prophesied, *that they two should light such a candle in England, as by God's grace would never be extinguished. Fox.* May God arise and shine upon his own work, causing it to shine more and more unto the perfect day of restitution of all things.

word, statutes, and judgments to Israel, he had not dealt so with any nation."

But when Christ the glory of his people Israel was manifested to them, in the fulness of time, he spread the knowledge of God and his grace, "preaching peace to them that were afar off, and to them that were nigh," both to Jews and Gentiles: And gave it in commission to his apostles to christianize the whole world of mankind, and preach the gospel to every creature: So the scripture was fulfilled, "the people which sat in darkness, saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."* And thus Christ is a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel. The Gentiles came to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising: So the church of Christ has commenced christian and catholic.

The goodness of God in revealing Christ and the saving doctrines of the gospel to the church is very great; "surely God is good to Israel."

The church is the repository of the revelations of God, and is intrusted with the care of them. They should be kept pure and uncorrupt, and so transmitted down to the latest generation. "The father to the children shall make known thy truth."†

And now, my brethren, let our hearts be warmed with a lively sense of "the loving-kindnesses of the Lord" to ourselves, and his "great goodness" to his church, and in his temple let every one of us speak of his glory, and shew forth his praise.

The foundation of our present happy establishment, and liberty, was laid by our pious fathers when they embodied in church-state here this day an hundred years ago, by a "solemn Covenant." Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers who inclined their hearts to lay such an early and *good foundation* for themselves and for their children *against the time to come*, when they were but few in number, but eight persons: And blessed be his glorious name that he has built us up and not plucked us down. We trust that "we are built upon the founda-

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* Isa. ix. 1, 2. compared with Matt. iv. 14, 15, 16. † Isa. xxxviii. 19.

tion of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." According to the *grace of God* which was given to our fathers, as *wise master-builders*, they laid the foundation, and others builded thereon; but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon, *not wood, hay, and stubble*, such things as will soon perish, and not bear the *fiery trial;* but let us build upon it, "gold, silver and precious stones," which shall "abide the trial," for "the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is; if any man's work abide, he shall receive a reward, if any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss."

Let us be careful to follow the piety and zeal of our fathers who first settled this country and this church. Let us *not be slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

We that are joined together in church-fellowship, profess to have laid the *foundation of repentance from dead works*, and *of faith towards God*: Therefore *leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.* And, O that the *Spirit of God and of glory may rest upon us*, and assist us in the solemn acts we are about to perform, in renewing the dedication of ourselves to God, in renewing the covenant that the pious fathers of this church entered into at the gathering of it, and in the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that all may *be done heartily as to the Lord*, and not to men, to the glory of God, and our mutual edification and comfort; that so the solemn transactions of this day may be accepted of God, and *turn to our salvation, through our prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*, to whom be glory in the church throughout all ages, world without end.

AMEN.

THE SECOND SERMON.

HAVING in the morning opened the first general head, which is to shew, that it is the duty, and hath been the pious practice of God's people to preserve and express the memory of his great goodness to them, I shall now apply myself, by divine assistance, to shew, in the second place, that it is also their duty, and hath been their pious care, to express the praises of the Lord in remembrance thereof; *I will mention the praises of the Lord, &c.*

The blessed God is *worthy to be praised.* The fulness and glory of his own perfections shining forth in his word and works, challenge the adoration and praises of the whole world. "All his works shall praise him, and his saints shall bless him. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever." Worthy is the Lord to receive blessing and praise, for all the displays of his glory in the works of creation, providence and redemption. "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" All the hosts of heaven and earth should join in this divine service, *Let every thing that hath breath, praise the Lord.* Thus we see the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable: *Who can shew forth all his praise?* The book of psalms is full of the high praises of God, and to mention them in order would be to repeat a great part of it. *Praise ye the Lord, for praise is comely for the upright.*

1. It has been the pious practice of the standing church of God to praise him for his loving kindnesses to themselves. *I will mention the praises of the Lord, according to all that he hath bestowed on us.* The devout psalmist very frequently calls upon his own soul, and upon the church of God to praise the name of the Lord, for his great mercies to himself and them. "Bless the Lord, O my soul. Blessed be the Lord, for he hath

shewed me his marvellous loving kindness."* So he invites the church of Israel to celebrate his praises; "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem, praise thy God, O Zion,"† for he hath done great things for them, both upon temporal and spiritual accounts, as the psalmist proceeds to testify in the following verses.

It well becomes every *soul apart*, every *family apart*, and every particular church and congregation *apart*, to celebrate the praises of the Lord with joyful lips, and with sincere hearts, that is, in the most christian and gracious manner, for *whoso* thus *offereth praise*, *glorifieth God*.

Every particular church of Christ and communion of saints, have reason, more or less, to mention the praises of the Lord, for his *marvellous loving kindness* to them; and they should be ready to this delightful and heavenly employment, and frequently exercise themselves in it: every member separately, and all the members conjointly; especially on some solemn occasions of recollection and rejoicing in the goodness of the Lord, such as is this day, wherein we are celebrating the memorial of Christ's resurrection, and by a wonderful concurrence of circumstances, we are also commemorating the favour of Christ in the plantation, preservation, and increase of this church for a century past. Let us then "say among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad; we will rejoice and be glad in his salvation," for under his shadow we shall live among the heathen. "Let us sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the Lord is our strength and song, and he is become our salvation; he is our God, and we will prepare him an habitation; our father's God, and we will exalt him."

If we exercise ourselves in the serious consideration and meditation of God's wonderful works to us, we shall find matter enough for devout and affectionate thanksgiving to his glorious name. Who can refrain himself upon this solemn occasion? Who can but prophesy? Who is so stupid and senseless as to restrain the praises of the Lord? "The Lord hath spoken, I have nourish-

* Psalm xxxi. 21. † Psalm cxlvii. 12.

ed and brought up children ; he is our Father that hath bought us, he hath made us and established us." Let it never be said, *tell it not in Gath*, that *we have rebelled against him.* Such was the shameful charge God fastened upon his people Israel, after all his kindness to them, in 9 and 10 verses of the context, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old, but they rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit." Let us take heed lest we fall after the same example of disobedience.

2. It has also been the pious practice of the people of God to celebrate his praises for his great goodness to the church in general. "I will mention the praises of the Lord, according to the great goodness towards the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving-kindnesses." Here is an uncommon fulness and fluency of speech, proceeding out of the abundance of the heart of the speaker, to express the extraordinary kindnesses of God to his church.

As God has taken care to preserve the memory of his goodness to Israel, in several significant institutions, so they have in obedience to the divine authority celebrated the memorials thereof.

Particularly, the institution of the Jewish passover in remembrance of God's delivering them out of the Egyptian bondage, which they observed to the Lord in their generations, to the period of the Mosaic economy : When Christ the true *passover was sacrificed for us*, and instituted the ordinance of the supper as a sacramental representation of his death to be observed in the christian church, to the end of the world ; *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

So the change of the Sabbath was made in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, as it was first instituted to be a memorial of the creation of the world. "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his.*

* Heb. iv. 10.

The Jewish church had many public records and memorials of God's wonders to them of old, as the *Song of Moses*, in memory of their deliverance at the *Red Sea*;* the song of Deborah and Barak, rehearsing the righteous acts of the Lord, and expressing his praises for delivering them from the hand of Sisera.† What a public and grateful testimony did king Solomon give of God's covenant faithfulness with the Israelitish church at the dedication of the temple? "Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised, there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant."‡ And what is the 136th Psalm but a song of praise and standing memorial of God's great goodness to them, beginning and ending with a solemn exhortation of praise to God? *For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever:* Which clause is repeated in every verse of the psalm, viz. twenty-six times. We read also of the song of the church in the New-Testament, "They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." So we have "the song of the angels, and of the church, saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."‖

Thus the church gives unto God the glory due unto his name, and shews forth his praise from age to age: "One generation shall praise thy works unto another, and shall declare thy mighty acts: they shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness."§

Moreover, considering that all the instances of God's loving-kindnesses, both to ourselves and others, are free and unmerited, we must acknowledge ourselves to be under all possible obligations of love and gratitude to the gracious Donor of them. "By grace we are saved: by the grace of God we are what we are. Every good

* Exod. xv. † Judges v. ‡ 1 Kings viii. 56.
‖ Rev. v. 9, 10, 12. § Ps. cxlv.

gift, and every perfect gift is from above." Thus it is said in the text, "which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses." This is the true source and fountain of all our blessings, and we hold all of his free mercy. *Glory be to God in the highest.* Let us praise God according as we have thought of his loving kindness, in the midst of his temple: and such as fear the Lord, will speak often one to another.

I have now finished the doctrinal part of my text, and shall now proceed to make some application of what has been said. First, With respect to this church and congregation in particular. Secondly, With respect to the churches in this land in general, according to the direction of the text.

1. This doctrine invites us to mention to the praise of God *the multitude of his mercies* to this church and congregation in particular. Let us be constrained to it; let the multitude of his loving kindnesses constrain us, and let us not forget any of his benefits. Let us this day *remember the works of the Lord, and his wonders of old:* and I desire to be your remembrancer of these things before the Lord, to speak of his glory in his holy temple, that God may be glorified, and we ourselves instructed and comforted.

Now then, let us look back to the original plantation and settlement of this town and church, and observe the several steps of divine Providence in our rise, growth, and establishment as it is this day, *according to God's mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.*

I have been careful to collect as succinct and just an account of these ancient things, as may be profitable to your religious improvement.

One of the first settlements and plantations in the Massachusetts-Bay, * was begun here, Anno

* There was a settlement in Wessagusset, now Weymouth, by Mr. Weston's people in 1622, who, proving an unruly company, having no good government over them, were broken up in one year: and an additional settlement of a better sort of people from Weymouth in England, in 1622. There were also some straggling plantations at Nantasket and Cape Ann. *See the Rev. Mr. Prince's annals, &c.*

1625,* by Capt. Wollaston and others, but they continued not long together in that place.

These lands were afterwards granted to Boston by the general assembly of the Massachusetts,† viz. Anno 1634.

The settlement was soon carried on by sundry inhabitants who came chiefly from Boston, and had grants of land from that town for their encouragement. They were erected into a township, Anno 1640‡ by the name of Braintree.

The Rev. Mr. Wheelwright preached some time to this part of the church and town of Boston, and acquired large possessions here.§

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* Captain Wollaston began his plantation in good circumstances, being well provided with servants, stores, &c Deputy Governor Dudley says, there came thirty with him. From him this place took the name of Mount Wollaston. Mr. Hubbard says the captain spent much labour, cost, and time in planting at Mount Wollaston. Mr. Prince conjectures he only tried the crops of the next summer, and finding things not answer his expectation, he removed to Virginia, with a great part of his servants in the fall of 1626.

But one Mr. Morton, whom he left there with part of the company, fell to great licentiousness and profaneness, till the good people in their scattered plantations in the Massachusetts-Bay unite with Plymouth government, and go and suppress them, and disperse the worst of the company, leaving the more modest here, and sending Morton to England with a messenger and letters, to inform against him, for his wicked and insufferable behaviour.

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† The words of the grant in the public records of this province run thus, viz. At a general court held at Newton, Sept. 3, 1634, It is ordered that Boston shall have enlargement at Mount Wollaston and Rumney-Marsh. The bounds were settled April 13, 1636.

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‡ At a general court of elections held at Boston, May 13, 1640.—The petition of the inhabitants of Mount Wollaston was voted, and granted them to be a town according to the agreement with Boston, and the town is to be called Braintree.

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§ This worthy gentleman's character and conduct are set in a clear light by the acute author of the late answer to a printed letter, &c. relating to the ministry land in South Kingston, Narragansett, Page 3. I shall give my reader a short abstract thereof, viz.

" Mr. Wheelwright, says he, was a noted preacher of the congregational way, and so remained as long as he lived : He was a member of Boston church, was desired by many to be their teacher, with Messrs. Cotton and Wilson, but the church being so well supplied, the church by vote on Oct. 30, 1636, allowed him to preach to some of their members removed to Braintree for the preparing for a church *gathering there* as the vote expresses it : Was in the same sentiments with Mr. Cotton, who in his *way of congregational churches cleared*, expresses a great value for him, and expressly tells us, though he gave some offence in some passages at the as-

After Mr. Wheelwright's removal from Braintree, the Rev. Mr. William Thompson and Rev. Mr. Henry Flynt soon succeeded in the sacred ministry; and embodied in church fellowship with six others, by that covenant which this church have solemnly renewed this day at the Lord's table.*

Shortly after Mr. Thompson and Mr. Flynt were ordained, the former to the office of pastor, and the latter to the office of teacher to the church, as the custom of these churches then was.†

Soon after this the church proceeded to the choice

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sembly, (which he since upon further conference and consideration retracted) yet neither the church nor myself, (notwithstanding those unsafe expressions) did ever look at him either as an Antinomian or Familist: Many of us knew that he had taken good pains against both, and in that very place where he was wont to preach, that is Braintree, then a branch of Boston church.

"The State indeed did censure Mr. Wheelwright, in March, 1636-7, *not for his opinions*, but for a sermon which they judged *contemptuous and seditious*. And in November following, *disfranchised* and *banished* him for *justifying* the same. Yet Boston church never saw cause to censure him. But on Jan. 6, 1638-9, they dismissed him with some others of the brethren to the church of Exeter: After which he was reconciled to the Court, afterwards became pastor of the congregational church at Wells; and in 1662, of the congregational church at Salisbury, where he lived in great esteem to his death, in 1679.

It is certain the proceeding of the government against Mr. Wheelwright and others, much grieved and offended many good people in the colony, and some removed to Rhode-Island, among whom was William Coddington, Esq. the munificent donor of our school lands, which now rent at 142*l.* from which this town has reaped great benefit in good schools for many years past.

The good people at Rhode-Island, quickly sent to the said Mr. Wheelwright, and urged him much to come to them, but he refused their earnest invitation and call of him to minister to them: *This cannot be sufficiently regretted.*

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* The church both males and females renewed the original covenant, by standing up and testifying their consent unto it, and resolution by the grace of God, to continue faithful in it unto the death.

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† Mr. Thompson was ordained eight days after the church was gathered, viz. Sept. 24, 1639, and Mr. Flynt the 17th of March following. This was the 20th church gathered in the Massachusetts colony.

In Oct. 1642, Rev. Mr. Thompson with Rev. Mr. Knowles of Watertown, engaged in a Mission to Virginia, upon letters from some well disposed people there to the ministers of New-England, entreating their compassionate consideration and relief of their destitute circumstances for want of good ministers to preach the gospel; but the next year they were driven home again by the government there who made this order, viz. *That such as would not conform to the ceremonies of the Church of England, should by such a day depart the country.*

and ordination of two deacons.* And some years after made choice of a ruling elder.†

After the decease both of the pastor and teacher;‡ the church fell into unhappy divisions, one being for Paul, and another for Apollos, (as is too often the case in destitute churches) and were without a settled ministry above four years, viz. from April 27, 1668, to Sept. 11, 1672, when the Rev. Mr. Moses Fiske was peaceably ordained the pastor of this church.§ After his

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* The first deacons of this church were Mr. Samuel Bass, having been dismissed and recommended to them from the church in Roxbury, July 5, 1640. And Mr. Richard Bracket, who was ordained July 21, 1642, having been received to communion by a letter recommendatory from the church of Boston, June 26, 1642.

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† Mr. Stephen Kinsley of Dorchester, now Milton, was ordained the first ruling-elder in this church, Oct. 12, 1653. I find in an old record of Mr. Flynt's, that on 27th March, 1653, votes were given for elders, and deacon Bracket had 18 votes, deacon Bass 15, and Mr. Kinsley 8. I suppose Mr. Bracket and Mr. Bass refusing, the lot fell upon Mr. Kinsley. Mr. Francis Eliot and Mr. William Alice were ordained deacons the same day, viz. Oct. 12. I find in the same manuscript of Mr. Flynt's, several persons were in nomination for deacons at this time, viz. July 3, 1653. viz. Mr. Alice, who had 21 votes, Mr. Eliot 17, Mr. Doscet 10, Mr. Penniman 2, Mr. Needham 1. The successive deacons to this day are these, viz. Mr. Robert Parmenter, chosen in the room of deacon Eliot, who deceased Oct. 23, 1677; and Mr. Samuel Thompson, son to the pastor, both ordained Nov. 2, 1679, by the Rev. Mr. Fiske. Then succeeded Mr. Thomas Bass, Mr. Joseph Penniman, Mr. Nathanael Wales, afterward ordained ruling-elder, viz. Feb. 27, 1700, by Mr. Fiske: The Rev. Mr. Peter Thatcher of Milton, and elder John Rogers of Weymouth joining in the laying on of hands. Mr. Benjamin Savel succeeded Mr. Wales in the deaconship, then Mr. Moses Paine, who is still living in an advanced age, then Mr. Gregory Belcher, who was killed by a plough, July 4, 1727, then Mr. Peter Adams, and Mr. Samuel Savel were chosen Aug. 21, 1727, who are also still living. So that there have been 14 deacons in this church, and 2 ruling elders. Elder Wales died March 23, 1717-18.

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‡ Mr. Thompson died here Dec. 10, 1668, Ætat. 68, and Mr. Flynt, April 27, 1668.

Mr. Flynt was father to the Rev. Mr. Josiah Flynt, formerly pastor of the church of Christ in Dorchester, and grandfather of Henry Flynt, esq. senior fellow of Harvard College.

During the time of Mr. Thompson's and Mr. Flynt's ministry, there were 204 adult members of this church. I have also a record in Mr. Flynt's manuscripts of baptisms from April 30, 1643, to March 1, 1667-8, though I am jealous there were some omissions; the whole number amounts to 408. I cannot find any account of baptisms in the time of vacancy between Mr. Flynt's death and Mr. Fiske's settlement.

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§ Mr. Fiske being sent by the court of sessions for the county of Suffolk, to preach God's word to the church of Braintree in their destitute divided state, I thought it not amiss to give a transcript of the order

death,* you were happily resettled in about nine months by the unanimous call and ordination of the late Rev. Mr. Joseph Marsh, to the pastoral office over you, viz. May 18, 1708, who continued his faithful labours among you till his translation,† whose memory is still precious with you.

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verbatim, because of the rarity and success of such an extraordinary proceeding.

At a county Court held at Boston, by adjournment 23 of Nov. 1671—The court having taken into consideration the many means that have been used with the church of Braintree, and hitherto nothing done to effect, as to the obtaining the ordinances of Christ among them : This Court therefore orders and desires Mr. Moses Fiske to improve his labours in preaching the word at Braintree until the church there agree and obtain supply for the work of the ministry, or this Court take further order.

This is a true copy as attest.

FREEGRACE BENDALL, CLERK.

Mr. Fiske obeyed and went not without the advice of the neighbouring elders, and preached his first sermon here Dec. 3, 1671. The next day about 20 of the brethren came to visit him, manifesting (in the name of the church) their ready acceptance of what the honoured Court had done, and thanking him for his compliance therewith ; and on Feb. 24, following, the church gave him a unanimous call to the pastoral office : This record I find in his own manuscripts. He was ordained Sept. 11, 1672; Mr. Eliot prayed and gave the charge, Mr. Oxenbridge and the deacons joined in the laying on hands, Mr. Thatcher of Boston gave the right-hand of fellowship.

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* Mr. Fiske died here Aug. 10, 1708, in the 66th year of his age, and 36 of his pastorate. In the time of his ministry 147 members were added to the church, including himself. Baptisms 779. No baptisms recorded in the time of vacancy.

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† Mr. Marsh deceased here March 8, 1726, in the 41st year of his age, and 17 of his Pastorate. The number of members added to this church under his ministry, including himself, is 102. Baptisms 288. In the vacancy between his death and my settlement, there were 8 baptisms.

This church claims the honour of having the sepulchres of their prophets with them to this day. Mr. Thompson's grave stone is still standing. Mr. Flynt's monument is still to be seen, though much gone to decay, but I hope to see the tomb of the prophet rebuilt.

Mr. Fiske and Mr. Marsh lie together in the same tomb under a handsome monument of stone, on which there is now to be seen the following inscription, viz.

Braintree ! Thy prophet's gone this tomb inters,
The Rev. Moses Fiske his sacred herse.
Adore heaven's praiseful art that form'd the man,
Who souls not to himself, but Christ oft won :
Sail'd through the straits with Peter's family,
Renown'd, and Gaius' hospitality.
Paul's patience, James' prudence, John's sweet love,
Is landed, entered, clear'd, and crown'd above.

Here follows the inscription upon the monument over the reverend and

Your present unworthy pastor was quietly settled here Nov. 2, 1726, in about eight months after the decease of your late Rev. pastor, and hath been *with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling*, almost thirteen years in the pastoral relation.* God hath so increased and multiplied you, that two distinct parishes have swarmed from you :† So that there are now in the town three worshipping assemblies of our own denomination, beside one of the church of England ‡

This is the third house‖ in which we are now worshipping, that we and our fathers have built for the pub-

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learned Mr. Leonard Hoar, D. M. and some time president of Harvard College, who died Nov. 28, 1675, Ætat. 45, and lies interred here.

Three precious friends under this tomb-stone lie,
Patterns to aged, youth, and infancy.
A great mother, her learned son, with child,
The first and least went free, he was exil'd.
In love to Christ, this country, and dear friends,
He left his own, cross'd seas, and for amends
Was here extoll'd, envy'd, all in a breath,
His noble consort leaves is drawn to death.
Strange changes may befall us ere we die,
Blest they who well arrive eternity.
God grant some names, O thou New England's friend,
Don't sooner fade than thine, if times don't mend.

His aged and pious relict, the late madam Usher, was brought hither from Boston, and interred in the same grave, May 30, 1723, according to her desire.

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* In this time there have been added to the church, including myself, 105. So that the whole number of church-members from the foundation of it to this time, amounts to 558. Baptisms since my settlement are in number 278. The whole number of baptisms upon record amounts to 1761.

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† The first precinct was voted Nov. 3, 1708, confirmed by the general Court, Nov. 5, following. The Rev. Mr. Hugh Adams was ordained the pastor of the church there, Sept. 10, 1707, when the church was also gathered ; but removed Aug. 22, 1710. The Rev. Mr. Samuel Niles is the present pastor of it, ordained May 23, 1711. The second precinct was voted, March 13, 1726-7, and soon after confirmed by the General Court. The third church of Christ was gathered May 28, 1731. The Rev. Mr. Elisha Eaton ordained the pastor of it, June 2, following.

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‡ The church of England in this place, within the compass of 40 years, have had several missionaries from the society in London for propagating the gospel, besides occasional preaching, viz. The Rev. Mr. Bartlet, Mr. Eagers, but they soon returned. The Rev. Mr. Miller, the present missionary, opened his mission here, Dec. 25, 1727.

‖ This latter beautiful house was raised July 27, 28, 29, 1731 ; was finished and dedicated Oct. 8, 1732, in peaceable times. The text preached upon at the dedication was Isa. lx. 13. The Sacrament of the Lord's

lic worship of God : May the *Lord have respect unto us, and unto our offerings*, and fill this house with his glorious presence, making the *glory of the latter house greater than of the former.*

Great is the liberty wherewith Christ made our fathers free, and in the defence whereof *they endured hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ;* and spent much blood and treasure ; and so have left this good land and many invaluable privileges *for an inheritance unto their children. Your fathers, where are they?* And the prophets, do they live forever ?*

But through the kind indulgence of Heaven and the tender mercies of our God, the " children of his servants

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Supper was then administered. At the same time also we began to read the holy Scriptures in course in the public assembly.

N. B. Madam Mary Norton, relict of the late reverend and learned Mr. John Norton of Hingham, the same day presented to the church a very handsome velvet cushion for the pulpit.

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* I observe in looking over the names of the first inhabitants here, that many ancient families are extinct, and their names lost. Again, some families have multiplied at a great rate ; particularly Mr. Samuel Bass's, who himself lived to the age of 94, and died Dec. 30, 1694 ; having been deacon of this church above 50 years. At his death he was the father, grandfather, and great grandfather of 162 children.

Mrs. Sarah Penniman, his youngest daughter, and relict of deacon Penniman, and formerly wife of Deacon Stone of Watertown, is now living among us, and was at our communion this day, in good health, and of a sound mind. She was baptized in this church, April 30, 1643 ; received to communion May 4, 1662. She is now at least in the 97th year of her life.

I think it is also worthy of notice, that 7 brethren and sisters, children of the late Mr. Stephen Paine, and grand children of deacon Bass, are now living together, the youngest whereof is 68, and the eldest died since the writing this, viz. on Dec. 10, 1739, 86 years old.

There have been also several other instances of longevity among us, viz. Mr Francis Newcomb, who died here May 27, 1692, upwards of an hundred. Mr. Lawrence Copeland, who died here Dec. 30, 1699, at least an hundred years old. Betty Suchunmug, Indian, was reckoned an hundred years old at her death.

There have been two remarkable instances of sudden death in the house of God in the time of divine service, viz. Mrs. Lydia Saunders who sunk down in her seat and died instantly, March 9, 1711, 12 A. M. in a good old age. And Mr. Joseph Parmenter, who dropt down dead in the pulpit, Feb. 20, 1737, 8 A. M. in the 82d year of his age.

Here follow some other instances of the increase and prosperity of some families among us, viz Mr. Henry Neal, the father of 21 children, written on his grave-stone. Mr. William Rawson the father of 20 living children by one wife. A remarkable instance of fruitfulness has been noticed in the second parish of this town, viz. That in the term of 25 years from the settlement of the Rev. Mr. Niles, 60 children were born at 30 births : Of which number Mrs. Arnold had 4 at two births in the space of eleven months. I think it is remarked that twin children have more commonly had twins than others.

do continue, and their seed is established before him; so that instead of the fathers are the children.

Now it should be our great care to *stand fast in the liberty* of our fathers, and remember their great errand into this wilderness, which was the advancement of the glory of God, and their own spiritual interest in the enjoyment of the pure ordinances and worship of God: Let us pursue this glorious design and build on their foundation. Why should any envy us the enjoyment of our civil and religious interests, and seek our hurt?

Let us cheerfully cast in our mite this day for the defence of (what is apprehended) a common cause.* God grant that all who love and seek the prosperity of these churches may prosper.

O that God would *pour out his Spirit* upon his servants, and his blessing upon our offspring, and by his Spirit and power *turn the hearts both* of parents and children "unto the Lord God of our fathers;" and "the disobedient to the wisdom of the just," to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

I would address the children of this church in the solemn language of David, in his dying charge to his son. "And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind,—if thou seek him he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off forever.†"

Have we not great reason to humble ourselves under the decay of vital piety, and the tokens of God's displeasure? *How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed?* Where is the primitive faith, zeal and purity of our fathers? *Is this our kindness to our friend? to our father that hath bought us?*

Shall not God's soul depart from us for these things? Is not *the glory departing* from the house of the Lord, and the solemn administrations of it? O let us lament for it, saying, ah, Lord, and ah, his glory! "Where is the Lord

* The support of the Rev. Mr. Torry in the defence of the ministerial lands in Narraganset, against the claims of the Rev. Dr. McSparran, a missionary of the church of England; our collection amounted to eleven pounds seven shillings, an handsome proportion.

† 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

God of Elijah ? Inquire ye, return, come." As it follows in our context, " then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, where is he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock ? Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him ? to make him an everlasting name. Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory :" Where is " thy zeal, thy strength, and the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies ? Are they restrained ? Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not : Thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer, thy name is from everlasting."

Let us remember from whence we are fallen, and return to the Lord, and he will return to us. Let us seriously consider *wherein we ought to return.* That should be our very serious inquiry in Mal. iii. 7. *wherein shall we return ?* We have the answer of God to his people Israel in the five following verses, which you may read and digest at your leisure.*

Blessed be God that we enjoy so much peace and quietness in this place under our different apprehensions and modes of worship : And if I have somewhat boasted of you for your peaceableness, prudence and charity, I hope you will not *make my glorying void.*† Wherefore

* How applicable these words are to God's people in this land under the present oppression of the sacred ministry, is obvious to every one that is wise to discern the signs of the times. I firmly believe that most of the fierce contentions that have risen in these churches of late years, are owing to the depreciating nature of the bills of credit, whereby the people have been deceived, and many of God's faithful ministers have suffered loss. Some of them have been exposed to the cruel hatred of their people by being obliged to sue out their honest contracts, in the common law, and then been forced to accept a dismission from their churches, contrary to the law of self-preservation.

† I verily think the conduct of this church and congregation, towards our brethren of the church of England, has been christian and exemplary : I will mention several instances of it, to the glory of God, and their praise. In the vacancy before the Rev. Mr. Miller received holy orders for this place, this church admitted to their communion all such members of the church of England, as desired to have occasional communion with us, and allowed them what posture of devotion they pleased, and they used to receive the sacrament standing.

N. B. It is pertinently observed by the forementioned ingenious author of the answer to the printed letter, &c. relating to the Narraganset affair : " That though by virtue of communion of churches, congregational churches admit to occasional fellowship the pious members of the church

let us " all study to be quiet, follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. If it be possible as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men : Above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." This is the bond of union, the cement of societies, without which they will soon disband and be dissolved. *Let brotherly love continue.*

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of England, as well as of all other protestant churches, without obliging them to own our covenant, or submit to our government ; yet it is the most known and avowed principle of congregational churches from their original, that as the matter of christian churches is visible saints ; so the form of particular churches which distinguishes them from others, is only the mutual covenant between their members, whereby they are especially bound and joined to each other in one society. Till therefore the members of other churches are received by covenant, we do not account them members of those churches they hold occasional fellowship with, nor enter them into our record of members ; but account them members of those other churches, though they live ever so long, and have fellowship with us."

Upon Mr. Miller's coming, this parish reimbursed (according to their own previous vote) to the declared members of the church of England, their proportion of the charge of my settlement, and generously excused them from any further payments towards my support. And this was done before ever any act of this nature passed in the government. The vote above referred to, is in these words, viz.

Braintree, North precinct, May 29th, 1727.

" John Vesey, Benjamin Vesey, Henry Turner, Samuel Payne, and Samuel Hayden, personally appearing at this meeting, and desiring that the case of their being lately taxed to the settlement and support of Mr. John Hancock, might be considered by the precinct, and that they might be relieved in the premises."

" The question was put by the Moderator, whether the precinct will reimburse John Vesey, Benjamin Vesey, Henry Turner, Samuel Payne, and Samuel Hayden, the sum or sums they are or shall be assessed, and that shall or may be collected of them, for the ordination charge, and settlement of our Rev pastor, Mr. John Hancock, when they shall have a minister of the church of England settled and supported among them ? It passed in the affirmative."

A true copy from Braintree North Precinct records.

JOHN ADAMS, *Precinct Clerk.*

I cannot well help inserting here the following paragraph out of Mr. Rapin, which will please the ingenious reader.

Upon Charles Vth's resigning the empire to his brother Ferdinand, he delighted very much in mechanical curiosities, and particularly had a great variety of clocks which he tried a long time to cause to strike exactly together, but could never bring it about ; whereupon he broke out into this remarkable exclamation ; " How vain and foolish is it for princes to endeavour to make all their subjects to be of one mind in religion, when no art is able to make a few clocks strike together."

This was truly a wise reflection, worthy to be inscribed in letters of gold upon the door posts of every potentate and prince on earth ; and has been established by the unsuccessfulness of the several acts of uniformity, passed in several reigns of the British Monarchs, since the reformation ; and is justified by the present toleration.

Let us begin our second century with new and better frames, tempers and resolutions than we have ever had; and make it our constant and zealous endeavour to express a grateful sense of the divine favours in the virtues and praises of a life devoted to God: "As a chosen generation, a peculiar people, shewing forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into this marvellous light and liberty, and commanding our children and households to keep the way of the Lord —that the Lord may *abundantly bless us* in all our generations. "I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations, therefore shall the people praise thee forever and ever."*

2. Let us all be exhorted to mention to the praise of God, the great goodness which he hath bestowed on his churches and people in this land.

It is certain God did great things and marvellous for our fathers, in their first plantation and settlement in this country, when it was a land not sown, and possessed by brutish savages. Our fathers saw the hand and work of God and *were glad;* and they frequently met together for religious conference, "to mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that he had bestowed on them." They spake often one to another of these things to the praise of God, and their mutual edification and comfort.

And it becomes us also, the posterity of those great and good men, who *bear the heat and burden of the day*, to speak of them with pleasure and gratitude.

The preparation and room God made before our fathers,† should be marvellous in our eyes, and is worthy

* Psalm xlv. ult.

† Rev. Mr. Prince in his chronological history of New England, has carefully collected the memoirs of ancient things for the instruction of this and succeeding generations; a work of vast labour and general usefulness, deserving the praise and acceptance of the multitude of his brethren. And may it please the sovereign God to lengthen out his useful life, for the finishing this great undertaking, and farther services in the church of Christ.

I shall take the liberty of transcribing some material passages from his history to my present purpose.

"Divers attempts, says he, are made to settle this rough and northern country; first by the French, who would fain account it part of Canada. And then by the English, and both from mere secular views; but such a train of crosses accompany these designs of both the nations, that they

of a very particular remembrance ; as for instance, in a great "plague that befel the natives in New-England, which wasted them exceedingly two or three years before the coming of the English ; by which so many of them died, that the living were not able to bury them, and their skulls and bones remained above ground at the places of their habitations for several years after."

God hereby testifying that the iniquity of the Amorites was full, and that he was making room for a better people.

"So remarkable also was the providence of God in conducting our fathers to the place where they at first sat down,* for it was beside their design to settle on this northern shore ; being bound to some unknown country further southward about Hudson's River ; but by their being guided hither they then unknowingly escaped the greatest danger of falling among the multitude of savages at that time filling the countries about Hudson's River, and were landed in a place of greater safety, where God prepared the way for this feeble company by thinning the natives.

And as evident an interposition of Providence was the extraordinary restraints laid upon those that survived that were disposed to do hurt to God's *little flock* in this wilderness: The whole number that arrived at Cape Cod harbour, consisting but of 101 souls."†

Thus God was pleased in a wonderful and extraordinary manner, to introduce and settle this handful of people on this strange and distant shore ; and to preserve

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seem to give it over as not worth the planting. Till a pious people of England, not there allowed to worship their Maker according to his institutions only, without the mixture of human ceremonies, are spirited to attempt the settlement ; that here they might enjoy a worship purely scriptural, and leave the same to their posterity.

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* "It was on the ninth of Nov. 1620, that they made land, after long beating the sea ; and on the 31st of Dec. following, they kept their first Sabbath on the main land, at the place now well known by the name of Plymouth. At this time Mr. Prince fixes the era of their settlement here."

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† "Within five month's time, above half their company are carried off by sickness ; whom they account as dying in this noble cause, whose memories they consecrate to the dear esteem of their successors ; and bear all with a christian fortitude and patience, as extraordinary as their trials."

them alive, and establish them through a series of kind and powerful providences, in the midst of an infinite variety of distressing difficulties and dangers.

We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst for them in their days, in the times of old: How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them, how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out: For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.*

"Thus God brought a vine into this land" from a far country, "and cast out the heathen and planted it, he prepared room before it and did cause it to take deep root, and it is filling the land. She sent out her boughs into the sea, and her branches unto the river. Return, we beseech thee, O God of Hosts, look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself. So will not we go back from thee. Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.†"

God enabled our fathers to do wonders in their infant state, both in the *wars of the Lord* against a barbarous enemy, and in *works of piety.*

But one of the most memorable instances of a public heroic spirit in our ancestors, is the founding the College.‡ This is enough to raise our esteem and veneration for them, that they took such early care (agreeable to the christian design of their transplantation into this wilderness) to transmit religion and learning to their posterity. This *makes us to differ* from the rest of the British colonies in America. In this respect this province may well be styled *princess among the provinces.* The praise of

* Psalm xliv. begin. † Psalm lxxx. 8, &c.

‡ A general court held at Boston, Sept. 8, 1636, advanced £ 400 towards building a college.

The Rev. Mr. John Harvard of Charlestown soon after bequeathed £ 779, 17s. 2d. towards the work, from whom the college took its name.

The college was founded in 1639. It has now completed its first century.

it is in all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ in this land, and churches in distant provinces also have been richly furnished with able and faithful ministers from this flourishing seminary. Scarce any one town in this province hath reaped greater advantage from it than this; there having been graduated in it, if I mistake not, 49 of the children of this people, and 42 of them out of this parish; many of whom have done worthily and been famous both in church and state.*

To this pious foundation we owe in great measure the preservation and security of our religious interests, and even the form of religion among us. May it ever flourish under the smiles of Heaven, the liberality and tender

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* One of the highest characters in the government hath been raised up from hence, viz. our late Hon. agent, Edmund Quincy, Esq. my honoured and dear friend. The general assembly have given orders to erect to his precious memory a handsome monument upon his grave in Bunhill-fields, London, with this elegant Latin inscription, viz.

Edmundi Quincy Armigeri, patria Nov-Angli Massachusettensis, viri pietate, prudentia, et bonis literis, spectati hic depositæ sunt reliquiæ.

Qui variis ab ineunte ætate muneribus in Re tam civili, quam militari a suis sibi commissis (his præsertim Regi a Conciliis, Curiæ supremæ Judicatoriæ Justiciarii, et Militum Tribuni) summa Facultate, et spectata Fide Functus, Laudem merito adeptus est.

Re Patriæ suæ publica postulante ad aulam Britannicam legatus est profectus, ut Jura suorum et commoda procuraret.

Variolis Arreptus, morte præmatura obiit, et cum eo Emolumenta, quæ in ejus legatione, summa cum spe reposita erant, omnibus suis popularibus penitus desiderabilis, decessit, at nullis magis quam Patrio Senatui, qui in Amoris Testimonium et gratitudinis, ejus Tumulo hoc epitaphium inscribi curaverunt. Obiit Londini, Feb. 23, 1737, ætat. 57.

For the sake of the English reader, I have translated it into English, as follows.

Here are deposited the remains of Edmund Quincy, Esq. native of the Massachusetts Bay, in New England, a gentleman of distinguished piety, prudence and learning.

Who early merited praise, for discharging with the greatest ability and approved integrity, the various employments, both in the civil and military affairs that his country intrusted him with, (these especially, as one of his Majesty's council, a Justice of the Supreme Court of Judicature, and Colonel of a regiment of foot.

The public affairs of his country so requiring, he embarked their agent to the court of Great Britain in order to secure their rights and privileges.

Being seized with the small pox, he died a premature death, and with him, the advantages expected from his agency with the greatest prospect of success: he departed the delight of his own people, but of none more than the senate, who, as a testimony of their love and gratitude, have ordered this Epitaph to be inscribed on his monument.† He died at London, Feb. 23, 1737, in the 57th year of his age.

† The monument itself was raised at the expense of the government; viz. twenty pounds sterling.

care of the government,* and the benefactions of other pious friends.† Hence what a pleasant thing is it to see the gospel carried into the wilderness with all our new settlements! There being a rich supply of good ministers for them all, and for several assemblies of christianized Indians in divers parts of the province. May all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ stand and flourish under the tender care of the great Shepherd of the sheep.

And now seeing God has done so many and wonderful works for us, may we not receive them as so many earnests of his goodness for the time to come? Let us humbly plead God's *former loving-kindnesses*, in our intercessions for all the farther displays of mercy we need. "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God; therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."‡

Let us humbly beseech the glorious God to *appear in his glory and build up Zion*, to revive his work in the midst of the years, and *pour out his Spirit on all flesh*, and remove the *iniquity of this land*, and of this church in *one day*. That he may be with us as he hath been with our fathers, and never leave nor forsake us. O that our prayers and praises, with our alms, may come up for a memorial before God this day. "Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God: that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you forever."§ Now blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting and to everlasting,

AMEN and AMEN.

* The late liberality of the government to the Rev. and Hon. Mr. president Holyoke, is an acceptable and fresh instance of their paternal care for the prosperity of the college.

† Among whom Thomas Hollis, Esq. the late munificent founder of the divinity and mathematical professorships in Harvard College, should be always mentioned with particular esteem.

‡ Num. xiv. 17—20. Joel ii. 17. Ps. xxxvi. 7. § 1 Chron. xxviii. 8.

ADDITIONAL NOTES
IN 1811.

THE Rev. Mr. Hancock, author of this Discourse, died May 7, 1744, in the 42d year of his age, and 18th of his ministry. To him succeeded the Rev. Lemuel Bryant, who was ordained Dec. 4th, 1745. He was possessed of strong intellectual powers, but in his religious sentiments was too liberal for the period in which he lived. He was dismissed October 22d, 1753. In 1755, the Rev. Anthony Wibird was ordained to the pastoral office in this place, and continued till June 4th, 1800, when he departed this life in the 72d year of his age, and 46th of his ministry. For several years previous to his death he was prevented by infirmity from discharging the duties of his sacred office. On this account the town invited their present pastor, the Rev. Peter Whitney, to settle with them, as colleague with the Rev. Mr. Wibird. Accordingly his ordination took place, Feb. 5th, 1800.

The people of this first parish in Braintree, petitioning to be made a distinct town, were incorporated by the name of Quincy, Feb. 23, 1792.